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ABSTRACT

A survey conducted by 8 University of Minnesota students was taken in the urban slum of Minneapolis. The survey was concerned with the contemporary situation of urban American Indians and with the attitudes of local businessmen toward urban Indians. The method used involved recording respondent's answers, and much of the content of the respondent's answers are reported in the form of direct quotes. Respondents were selected from a representative sample of establishments in the area--public agencies, religious agencies, thrift shops, retail stores, and gas stations. Questions were based on the instructor's questions, and the data are presented in analyzed form. In evaluating the study, it was concluded that the respondents voiced what they believed the interviewers wanted to hear. This suspicion was based on 2 observations: (1) Many answers were qualified in such a way as to contradict the basic response, and many ambiguities made it difficult to understand what the respondents felt. Many responses seemed to be given with an attitude of caution and lack of thought or interest, although a statistical summary of the responses was attempted. (2) The experiences of the informants with American Indians appeared to be extremely minimal. The only contact seemed to be through the buying-selling relationship. From this fact, it was assumed that much of the responses were based on hearsay and personally untested ideological opinions. (FF)

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INDIAN AMERICANS IN SOUTHSIDE MINNEAPOLIS: ADDITIONAL FIELD NOTES FROM THE URBAN SLUM

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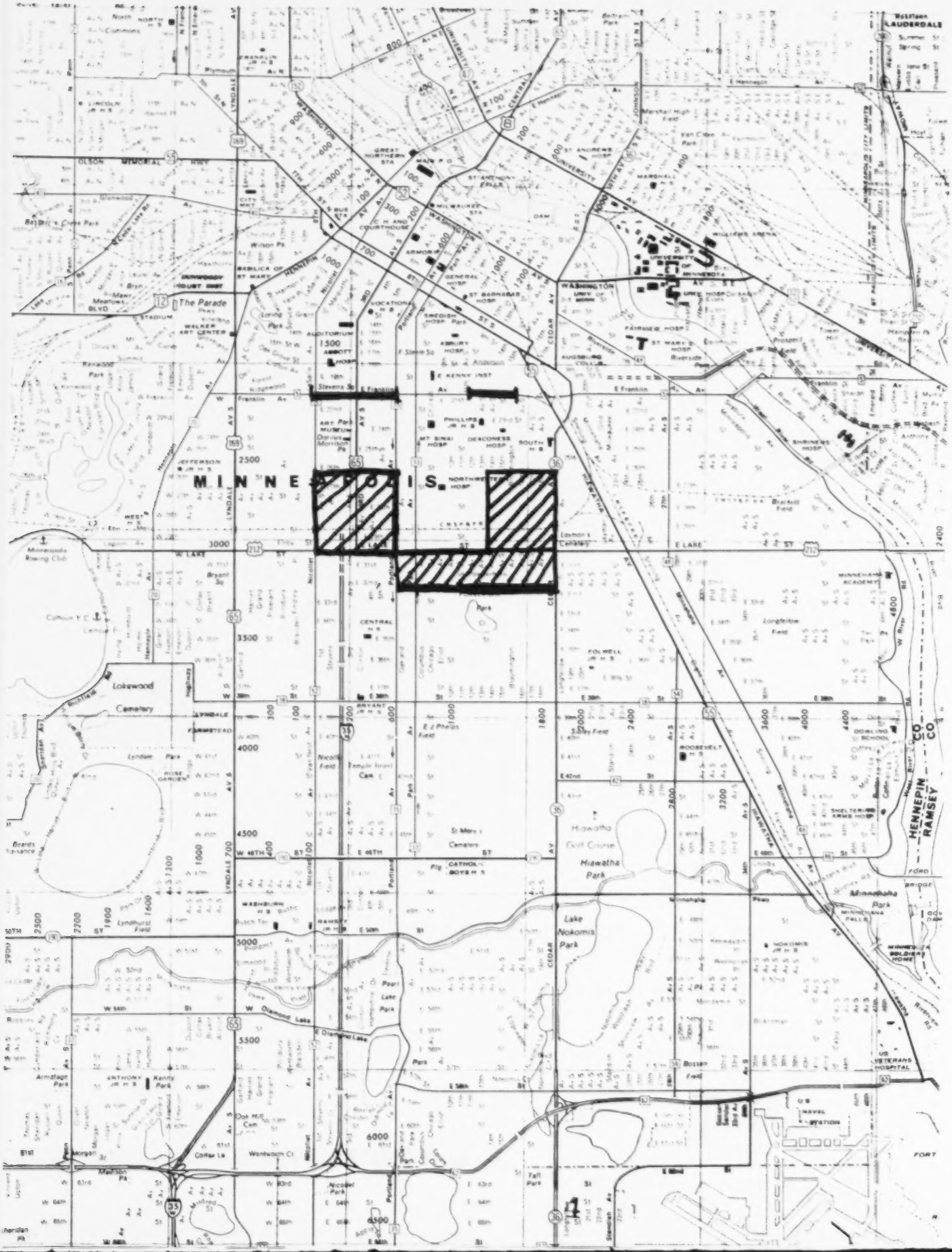
Methods of Interviewing

The interviewers introduced themselves as students in a course at the University of Minnesota that dealt with the contemporary situation of American Indians in the United States. The respondents were assured that all comments and information were to be kept strictly confidential.

The questions suggested by the instructor of the course (see the Appendix) were rather rigidly adhered to in several interviews, but as we became more experienced, we found that using the questions only as a point of departure served our purposes better. We found that adhering rigidly to the prearranged questions tended to inhibit some respondents and encouraged brief and misleading answers. In many cases, the respondents were left to their own inclination as long as their comments bore some relevancy to the ends sought.

We also found that recording the respondents' answers as they were speaking tended to limit the quality and quantity of their responses. Occasionally, remarks were written down immediately, but for the most part, we found that recording the interview after its completion was the best method as far as encouraging open and honest responses. Much of what was said in the course of the interviews has been recorded in the form of direct quotes in order to preserve the accuracy and original intent of the respondent.

This informal conversational approach to interviewing also served to allay the suspicions of the respondents. We found that many of the people whom we approached became defensive the minute we said what we were doing the survey on. We believe it was either a real defensiveness <u>for</u> the Indian <u>against</u> a suspected interviewer or it was a defensiveness because some respondents did not want to appear "anti-Indian" to us. We found that it was very hard to ask questions related to the comparison of Indians to other groups in the city of Minneapolis. Many seemed to think that it would appear "anti-Indian" to say that Indians had "more" or "different" problems than any other ethnic group. Belief in the "melting pot" was strong in the area that we surveyed.


MINNEAPOLIS
Lake Nokomis Park
Hiawatha Park
Minnehaha Park
Lakewood Cemetery
Lake Harriet
Lake Calhoun
Diamond Lake
Pearl Lake
Lake Hiawatha
HENNEPIN CO
RAMSEY CO
The Parade
Stadium
Auditorium
Armory
Basilica of St Mary
Wilson Pk
Loring Park
Walker Art Center
Art Park Museum
Daniel Morrison Pk
Minneapolis Rowing Club
Calhoun Y.C.
Lyndale Farmstead
Lyndale Park
Rose Garden
Bryant Sq
Central H S
Jefferson Jr H S
Lincoln Jr H S
Franklin Jr H S
Phillips Jr H S
Roosevelt H S
Washburn H S
Anthony Jr H S
Nokomis Jr H S
Folwell Jr H S
Pig Catholic Boys H S
Minneapolis Boys Home
Veterans Hospital
U S Naval Aviation
Fort
University of Minnesota
Williams Arena
Marshall H S
Van Cleve Park
Great Northern Sta
Main P O
Mill Walker Sta
St Anthony Falls
C H and Courthouse
St Barnabas Hosp
Swedish Hosp
Asbury Hosp
Abbott Hosp
Augsburg College
Fairview Hosp
St Mary's Hosp
Riverside
Deaconess Hosp
Mt Sinai Hosp
Northwestern Hosp
South H S
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Minneapolis Academy
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Bracket Field
Nicollet Field
Temple Israel Cem
E J Phelps Field
Lyndhurst Field
Sibley Field
Dowling School
St Mary's Cemetery
Oak Hill Cem
Pioneer Park
Kenny Park
Armatage Park
Nicollet Park
Bossen Field
Tait Park
Morgan Pl
Cedar Ln
Wentworth Ct
Oliver Ave
Columbus Ave
Chicago Ave
Portland Ave
Nicollet Ave
Hennepin Ave
Lyndale Ave
Cedar Ave
Minnehaha Creek
Minnehaha Falls
Minnehaha Pkwy
Ford Bridge
Olson Memorial Hwy
Lake St
Franklin Ave
Washington Ave
University Ave
Central Ave
Johnson St
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Cemetery
Lyndale
Farmstead
Lyndale Park
Rose Garden

The Avenue

The area that we have chosen to designate "The Avenue" lies on the southside of Minneapolis in an area that has been described as being "one-third white, one-third black, one-third Indian, 100% poor." To gather information concerning the attitudes of local businessmen toward their Indian customers, we decided to select what we believed to be a representative sample of establishments in the area. We also included a small number of non-retail concerns. We decided to interview the owner (if available) or someone who would be the most likely to come into contact with Indian persons. We were able to talk to someone in quite a few of the places that we selected; one was so busy serving its Indian customers that no one had any free time to answer our questions. Several places were not included due to the lack of time for repeated visits or due to the extremely hostile reactions given when the interviewers approached a prospective respondent.

Public Agencies Along the Avenue

A Southside Public Hospital

We interviewed one of the men in charge of admissions for the public hospital that serves the area along the avenue. He estimated that out of the thirty to forty admissions a day, ten to twenty are Indian. He said that several Indians appeared to have chronic problems with diseases linked to alcoholism, such as delirium tremens, cirrhosis, and gastritis. He felt that Indians should be treated the same as anyone else but he did admit that Indian patients posed a unique problem for the hospital:

> They are so transient that the hospital runs into many difficulties collecting funds from the health services on the home reservations. It really is a waste of time to write letters and make phone calls trying to collect. They should set up some special fund to care for Indian patients. They all come from lower socio-economic groups and never have medical insurance; they all expect to be free patients, although we occasionally do have a family that attempts to pay the bill. Whenever we have an Indian patient who has to be hospitalized for a long period we try and have him transferred to a reservation hospital. This is public policy, due to the money situation. We have no choice in the matter.

He went on to say that their main problem was lack of money; this problem he traced back to the fact that "Indians frequently change jobs." He said that he knew that Indians faced many problems of adjusting to the city -- housing, job-hunting, transportation, and the school system. However, he believed that "an Indian motivated to do so would be quite able to take care of his problems." He felt that as they move away from the reservation, their families will become like others of the dominant society and that they were apt to lose their cultural identity.

A Southside Public Library

The middle-aged white female librarian at the neighborhood public library said that they have many Indian patrons. She said that she had noticed that they tend to read books on Indian culture, music, history, and art. In fact, it was especially hard to keep any craft books on hand, "because they are constantly in use." The library has craft work classes two nights a week and shows many films dealing with American Indians. She took us on a tour of the library, showing various books and magazines, and gave us a copy of an annotated bibliography on American Indians published by the Minneapolis Public Library.

Religious Agencies along the Avenue

A Southside Church

The pastor of a southside church stated that "quite a few Indians" use the facilities of the Church, although few are congregation members. The church halls are used for meetings and pow-wows and the church freestore is patronized by many Indians. (On the morning we were there, ten Indians had been in to use the freestore by eleven o'clock.) He said that when he was new to the area, he had offered a group of Indians use of the church's facilities; he described their reaction as being one of: "Leave us alone; if we need things, we'll ask." He stated that they did just that. He summed up the general Indian situation as follows:

> We must have long range social change in which various cultures can co-exist. Such change will require immense co-operation from whites and Indians alike. The basic problem is that white society has a general attitude of superiority and fails to recognize that Indians at one time had highly developed cultures.

The pastor went on to say that his own congregation was illustrative of the kinds of problems that he foresaw:

> My policies of "opening up" the church have created many negative feelings within the congregation. I have attempted to give talks about minority groups and have faced much hostility in the process. I believe that many of them are prejudiced not only against Indians but against all minority groups as well. I believe that any church that gets involved can expect trouble.
>
> For example, within the last two years, one Indian teacher and two Indian teacher-aides have begun to teach in our school. We have established an Indian heritage class and, in general, have increased our emphasis on the social aspects of our religion. This "innovation" has brought on a terrible reaction from a number of white parents. However, there is some hope in that the children in the school -- blacks, whites, and Indians -- get along quite well together.

He believed that the major result of his innovations has been the recent decline of membership in the congregation. As he saw it, the elderly remained, the middle-aged left, and the young did not attend church. Quite a few of the children enrolled in the school do not attend the church.

A Religious Welfare Service

We spoke to the woman in charge of the neighborhood branch of the agency; she said she had a master's degree in social work and was a registered nurse. The main function of the agency was to try to help with the basic needs -- food, clothing, housing, and employment.

> We average about 125 new cases a month, the bulk of whom come at the end of the month when the bills arrive. About 96% of our people are Indian. We refer them to agencies and people downtown. We help them get downtown; we aid in filling out forms, making appointments, and so forth. The bureaucracy downtown alienates and confuses many of our clients who are new to the city. We try and help the Indian family to do what it really wants to do; in fact, if they want to go back to the reservation, we help them make the necessary arrangements. We also have many families that seem to keep going back and forth from the reservation to the city.

She said that the main reason that they get so many more people at the end of the month is that planning is more difficult for them. "Many of the men rely on day-labor jobs and many of the families have relatives who drop in and stay (working or not) for various lengths of time. Our Indian clients feel obligated to share with all who are living in the house." She said that the Indians who come to the city must become able to work in the dominant culture but that this must be done without losing their awareness of their Indianness.

Thrift Shops Along the Avenue

The woman whom we interviewed in the first thrift shop said that she was one-fourth Cherokee, but in listening to her speak, we became aware that she considered herself to be more white than Indian. She said that many Indians came into the store.

> They usually buy clothes in large bundles. There is no differentiation as to age -- men, women, and children all come in. I try to help by selling them items at a lower price, one that they can afford. Since this is general policy when dealing with persons with little money, I try to set reasonable prices. Their main problem is bad housing due to discrimination. Landlords raise rents when they know the family is Indian; after paying for their housing, they usually have no money left for furniture or anything else. Generally, the women are very conscientious mothers, although the women tend to drink as much as the men. Their teenagers are wild and smoke grass. I'm not sure that the city is the answer to their problems, but I feel that they should try it in the city. If he doesn't like it, he should be able to return to the reservation.

The young white woman whom we interviewed in the second thrift shop was manager of the downstairs store. She did not readily respond to any of the questions but she said that about 25% of the customers were Indian. As far as she could see, "Indians bought the same things as other people, were the same as other people, and had the same problems as other people."

The older white male clerk at the third thrift shop said that he had many Indian customers. He had noticed that they tend to buy the cheaper things. He did not know if Indians have any different problems than others in the city.

In the fourth thrift shop, we spoke to an older white female clerk who said she did not live in the area.

> As far as I can see, Indians don't have different buying habits. They do buy in larger quantities because of their larger families and they like beadwork better, but they are generally the same as other people. I imagine that the ones newly-arrived from the reservations have some problems, but the ones who have lived in Minneapolis for a few years seem to have adjusted quite well.

A young female clerk in the same store said she was a Big Sister to an Indian girl. She also said that a young Indian man worked in the store. She felt that

> Indians have different problems in coming to the city and the biggest problem is ignorance. The situation of Indians is very bad in Minneapolis. Many are alcoholics, and some have died from excessive drinking. Education just has not been emphasized on the reservations; the young generation of Indians must get a good education and help solve the problems of Indians.

Retail Stores Along the Avenue

A Southside Furniture Store

The owner of the store told us:

> We don't look at color if their credit is good. The big problem with the Indian people is checking their credit rating. Most of them have never bought anything on credit before, so we've nothing to go on. Ones down from the reservation don't know what credit is. I try to explain it to them as best I can. When I ask if they understand, they say yes, but I don't think they do. However, we'll bend over backwards to help them. We've given credit to poor risk Indian families that we wouldn't have given to poor whites under the same circumstances.

In talking to one of the salesgirls, it was mentioned that the men are more open than the women insofar as willingness to talk is concerned.

> The women, as a rule, are very shy. They hang back and let their husbands do the talking. They even let the men pick out the furniture.

A Southside Music Store

The two co-owners explained that they did not see many local residents because they were wholesalers and could not sell to the public.

> Indians occasionally come into the store to look at guitars. Our only problem with them is the difficulty of getting them to understand that we are wholesalers and the law forbids us to sell to the public. Even if they don't really understand what "wholesale" means, they usually leave politely. Once we got an old one in who was pretty well boozed up, but he wasn't belligerent like some of the coloreds get when they come in -- or the hippies.

A Southside Flower Shop

We interviewed the owner who said that she had very few Indian customers -- "maybe one in four hundred." However, she did describe some encounters that she had had.

> Sometimes the older men come in here drunk and ask for money. I give it to them because I'm afraid of what they'll do if I don't. One old man comes in every so often and plays with the cats. When he's just a little drunk, he's nice to them but when he gets falling down drunk, he's mean to them. He's just like a child and holds them by their tails and pulls their ears. I sometimes have to scold him. In general, I feel sorry for the Indians. They are a forgotten, lost people. They don't belong in the city but back at home on the reservation with their own people.

The respondent gave us little other information, but answered most of the prescribed questions with "I don't know."

A Southside Delicatessen

An employee of this establishment told us that they had never hired an Indian because "none had ever applied." The Indian customers were mostly women and children, and they usually bought cookies and doughnuts. Although he admitted that he had had little personal contact with Indians, he did say that he had observed them passing by the store and had formed several conclusions:

> Their main problem seems to be identity. Lately there has been a return to beadwork, headbands and moccasins among the younger ones. I think that they are trying to express the idea of "Red Power" in their style of dress. This is an extremely good thing because they need a revival of their pride in their culture. I think that they should try and make it in the cities because I feel that they have a place here.

A Southside Food Market

The food market worker we questioned was rather evasive and suspicious. He said that he was only a part-time employee. (The manager was occupied whenever we came by to interview him.) Our informant said tht he had never dealt with Indians personally but he had noticed that they came in to buy staples such as flour, sugar, and bread in large quantities.

> Their main problem is economic. They just don't earn enough to meet their expenses. They find it difficult to get jobs because they are discriminated against and because they usually lack marketable skills. But as far as I can see, they dress and act like the majority of people coming into the store.

A Southside Restaurant

We talked to a middle-aged white female waitress who told us that only about 10% of their customers were Indian. (Personal observation bears this out. Indians usually frequent a cafe down the street that has Indian personnel and notices of important Indian events.) The waitress went on to say that

> Indians are like any other nationality. They have their belligerent ones but somehow, Indians as a group are more belligerent. They have no adjustment problems in this city and if they wanted to, they could hold a job just like I have all my life.

A Southside Cleaners

The woman we interviewed here had lived in the immediate area for a few years. She had definite opinions which were the result of her work in a nearby restaurant frequented by Indians.

> A large number of Indians came in drunk; some of them passed out on the floors and tables. (They spend all of their money quickly and it's usually for liquor. The first and the fifteenth are the worst because that is when the welfare checks are out.) They would come into the restaurant and order chicken, eggs or hamburgers and then not be able to pay the bill. What is worse, if one could not pay a check, another one would pay it for him. They usually protect their own kind even if they fight otherwise. Generally, they are dirty, filthy, and loud. They should be nice and mannerly and not push their way in.

A Second Southside Cleaners

The woman we interviewed at the second cleaners said that she had not know of any Indians who had worked in the establishment nor had she ever spoken to any of the Indians who came in to clean their clothes. She said that she had never really paid too much attention to them and that, in the four years she had been living in the city, she had never heard of Indians having any special problems. As far as she was concerned, Indians could be just as good or bad as anyone else.

A Southside Ice Cream Store

The man we interviewed said that no Indians had ever been hired there "because there are only two workers at this location and there has been no turnover in a long time." The Indians are no different than any of the other customers and they come in frequently. He said that he had two or three very good friends who were Indian and that he gathered from them and from observation of Indian customers that

> The main problem is the inability to obtain a decent job because they lack the necessary skills. They need the training and education for the job. As it is, they find it hard to conform to the rigidity of a working schedule, probably because they are usually placed in monotonous, unskilled jobs and begin to feel "trapped." They also have a bad attitude toward whites because they feel that they are placed in a "lower" status by the dominant society.

A Southside Real Estate Agency

The man we interviewed said that the agency primarily handled buildings for rent and for sale in the urban renewal area. The average rent for the properties he handled was $100 a month; he assured us that

> We don't rent to anyone who hasn't been on a job for a year; however, if the housing is really bad, I rent to anyone off the street. As far as Indians go, there are a few good ones; these are usually your farm types. Quite a few are bad problems because all they do is collect their checks and drink. They need to be supervised. I think that they should be placed in a dormitory which would be supervised by tribal leaders and a white man would act as advisor. I wouldn't try to make money on the deal, but I would have to

> be compensated for my time, renting an office and so forth. One thing is sure -- those Indians have to change. They are very dishonest and only tell you what you want to hear. They don't have the problems of blacks and they could be accepted if they wanted to be. In fact, if they were only a little more selfish, they would make it.

The man concluded his remarks with the observation that he had attempted to set up an employment agency but it failed because he could never find people that he could recommend.

A Southside Liquor Store

The white middle-aged male clerk at the liquor store said that he had no more problems with Indian customers than with any others. He said that they had as wide a range of preference as other people and that they had no different problems in adjusting to the city.

A Southside Clothing Store

We talked to two middle-aged white male salesmen who said that they did not live in the area. They felt that they had a lot of Indian business "because it is an Indian neighborhood."

> Indians aren't really different from our other customers because they all buy only what they need. Indians follow other Indians in styles, just like whites follow other whites. For a long time, Indians wanted long sleeve shirts and darker colors, especially black pants. Recently, they have started to dress like most of the people in the area, like the whites.

A Second Southside Clothing Store

The middle-aged white female clerk we spoke to said that she had been with the store for a long time. She told us that she remembered that when the store first opened:

> Indians resented the store but over the years the resentment has gone. We have very good relations with our Indian customers. Indians do not have any "different" buying habits. The only way that they are "different" is in physical appearance. This might be a major source of their problems; they are discriminated against, especially when looking for employment, because they "look different." If others would give Indians a chance, they would be able to show their excellent qualities and abilities.

A Southside Nursery

The owner of the nursery gave her viewpoints quite readily when we came to interview her. She said that she had just recently purchased the nursery and had had little contact with Indians since her childhood near a reservation.

> We have one Indian child at present and have had two in the past. These children did not recognize that they were Indian. I expect that we will have many more Indian children in the future, after word gets around that we have hot meals, rest periods, and games. I believe that we take excellent care of the children while the parents work.

The woman went on to say that her husband works at Honeywell and that he has noticed that the Indian youths that are recruited have problems "realizing the value of conforming to a work schedule." She said that this problem stems from a lack of "initiative."

> We took initiative away from the Indians on the reservations. They must relearn everything when they come to the cities. They are in a bad frame of mind to begin with. They should be able to live anywhere they please, but they also should expect life in the city to be different from life on the reservation. If they are country-wise, they should go back to the reservation. If they are city-wise, they should stay in the city. If they really want to stay in the city, they should be able to get help to learn how to adjust. They really can't be expected to give up the old culture and become completely assimilated. They are Indians and being Indian should be no handicap to being able to live in a city. Many Americans, especially in Minnesota, take great pride in the "old country" and Indians should have pride in their culture and traditions, too.

A Southside Drug Store

We spoke to a young white female clerk who was very busy and could talk for only a few minutes. She said that the buying habits of Indians were not any different from those of other groups. She felt that all people were the same and that Indians do not have any different or any more problems than any other people in the city.

Gas Stations Along the Avenue

The owner of the first gas station said that he had few Indian customers and perhaps only two or three regular Indian customers. He said that maybe one out of every fifty customers was Indian. He maintained that, in the eight years he had had the business, he had not had one "bad incident" nor did he think that he ever would because, as he said,"I treat them just as I would expect them to treat me." He later expanded on this and said:

> They are hard to get to know. They're shy and don't talk much. I don't think it's just me. They're probably that way with a lot of white people. They don't trust us, I guess. I think the only answer is to get to the kids.

He did mention that he thought they had problems with alcohol and lack of money; this he traced back to lack of education and training. Again, he thought that the younger ones had a much better chance.

The second station, unlike the first, was situated on the main street and was busier and had a wider clientele. The owner has been situated on the corner for five years. He was frank and more than eager to answer any and all questions.

> I don't feel sorry for them at all. They made their own problems. Let them solve them. I don't think they should get a [redacted] penny of welfare. They don't deserve it. I was raised with Indians about ten miles from a reservation in Wisconsin and I learned damn soon never to turn your back on one. They'll cut your throat if you give the [redacted] a chance. I know. I had a buddy in high school get cut up by those [redacted]. Hell, out of a class of 81 in my high school, only 27 graduated and only 12 of these were Indians. Even the A and B Indian students dropped out at 16. Even the smart ones have no ambition.

At this point, his assistant joined the conversation and mentioned that just last Saturday an Indian threatened "to kick the [redacted] out of me" because there wasn't any change in the cash register. (Change wasn't delivered to the station until noon on Saturdays.) The owner then started talking again:

> Usually, they haven't got any money, so they'll come in and ask for 50¢ of regular. Sometimes they'll try to con you by wanting to exchange their spare tire for a couple of gallons of gas. I never do this because the tires are usually

> bald and probably stolen. Sometimes, they want to exchange jacks or tire wrenches for gas. They'll steal you blind if you don't watch close.

> They're bums and winos. Ask the guy at the drug store. They swipe cartons of cigarettes from him and then go up and down selling the stuff so they can get enough money to buy a jug for the weekend. Every Friday, like clockwork, we see two of them come out of the liquor store with a case of beer on their shoulders and go into that apartment house. One of them is married to a white girl. Either that or he's living with her. I see him with her all the time. She ain't bad looking either. But the Indian women, they're pigs.

A question was asked about their cars and what kinds of problems they had. The two men looked at each other and laughed.

> They're not cars. They're junkers. They don't even try to keep their cars in good shape. When you fix a car for a nigger, they'll usually ask you how you did it so they can do it for themselves next time. They're proud of their cars. Not the Indians. Sometimes they will get a decent car. Even then they run it right into the ground. Some of them come in here and they get a busted crankcase. No oil in the car. Just plain stupid.

When I suggested that my instructor had mentioned how Indians often bought junk cars near the reservation and were good enough mechanics to keep them in good running condition, they replied that my instructor was "full of [redacted] and didn't know anything about Indians or cars." The owner concluded by saying that he would "take a nigger to an Indian anytime."

The third gas station was located on the fringe area. The manager said that contacts with Indians were negligible. He said that he would hire an Indian if he were qualified. He stated that he knew little about the Indians in the area but he felt that they had no real problems.

The manager of the fourth gas station was more interested than the previous one, but his personal contact was as limited. He admitted that most of his views were taken from a television program about the Navajo reservation. He felt that their worst problems were economic in nature; his solution (taken from the program) was the investment of Federal money for industrialization of the reservations. He felt that Indians need not be assimilated if they did not want to be, and in order to make life bearable for those who chose to stay on the reservation, every effort should be made to make the reservations economically self-supporting.

The manager of the fifth station said that he employed two Indians from Canada and that he paid them three dollars an hour. From his experiences, he concluded that

> Indians have a negative attitude towards work. They see a job as an evil necessity instead of an opportunity. They are conscientious and hard-working while on the job, but are basically unreliable. They show up late, take days off without notice, and expect me to act as if nothing has happened when they finally show up again. They resent being told what to do, and expect me to treat them with kid gloves. They complain about the wages which are really very good considering that they aren't that skilled.

Along with his opinions on their employability, he had formed some ideas about Indians in general.

> Indians tend to dress sloppy and drive rundown cars. They are unwilling to spend money to make repairs. They feel that everyone is out to hit them in their pocketbooks. Their housing is really a mess. They overcrowd and have unsanitary conditions. Families try too hard to stick together and it doesn't work out. When they are in a crowd, they are just like whites; they laugh, and drink, socialize. Basically, their problem is that they expect too much and aren't willing to give anything in return. They have a "don't thank me, just pay me" attitude toward work and some employers would not appreciate it. Indians could make it, but they are going to have to accept the idea that they have to work for a living just like anybody else.

The sixth gas station manager said that he had had some "bad experiences" with Indian employees, that his interaction with Indian cus-

was "average." He stated that he had had a month's training in minority relations while learning his duties as manager in a school provided by the company, but this course did not deal specifically with Indians. He did not know any Indians socially. He had formed some definite opinions:

> They tend to be quiet among whites, but are boisterous among themselves. They are not good workers, are not dependable, and are irresponsible. They are often lazy and have bad drinking problems. They could find jobs, but they don't go out looking; when they get a job, they do only what is absolutely necessary and nothing more. I tried to help my workers with their drinking problems, but one night they got drunk, broke into the station, and threw everything around. I believe that Indians are the ones with the prejudices -- not the whites. They should try to make it in the Cities, but they don't really seem to want to make the effort.

Companies Along the Avenue

A Southside Textile Firm

The manager said that he has occasion to hire Indian women as seamstresses. He estimated that about one a month came in to apply for a job.

> I like hiring them because they are very good with their hands. I would like to hire more Indian women, but my experience has been that they are not good long-term employees. The longest term of employment has been about ten months. The reasons that they give for quitting are things like pregnancy or their husbands are taking new jobs out of state. I think that the real reason for their quitting is the unwillingness or inability to stick to a rigid eight to five schedule. They have never given me reason to fire them. They are good on the job, and they always manage to have reasons for their irregular hours. They are much better on the job than the white girls who, for the most part, are more reliable.
>
> Even though we have hired many, I don't really think I understand them. They are reticient and reluctant to discuss their problems. A lot of them just say they are quitting and give no reasons. They need patience and understanding. I know from the few conversations that I have had that they can be easily offended. You just can't be abrupt with them as you can be with a white person.

He went on to say that he could understand in some instances why some white people in the neighborhood had "negative" attitudes toward Indian people.

He related the following incident he had observed this past February.

> I was coming to work about a quarter to eight one morning when I saw this Indian couple coming down the street. They were both drunk and weaving all over the place. She had only a bathrobe on and seemed to be drunker that he was. She had no shoes on and her bathrobe was unbuttoned and you could see everything. She would walk on the sidewalk for awhile and then in the street, back and forth. Cars were honking all over the place and the drivers were having a great time. Things like that don't help them.

A Southside Insurance Office

The personnel manager said that he had very little occasion to interview Indian people as potential employees. (He hires mostly high school graduates as stenographers, switchboard operators, and typists.) As far as he could recall, he had interviewed only three Indian girls in the past six years. He had hired one of them and was "extremely pleased" with her work.

> She had worked with us through her senior year of high school as part of the training program and was hired on a permanent basis upon graduation. She was bright and caught on to things pretty fast. We trained her to run the switchboard and then after two months, we gave her further training in handling customer complaints. This was a lot of responsibility for an eighteen year old girl. She had to compose her own letters and was earning more money. One day she came in and said she was going back to the reservation. She said she had enjoyed the work and the other girls but she wanted to go back. I tried to persuade her to stay but she was determined to leave. I asked some of the other girls and they didn't know either. My guess is that she never did get to like the big city. I don't know what she sees back at her reservation. I've been up there fishing and it's just one big dump as far as I'm concerned. I'm sure none of the Indian girls up there have her intelligence or experience. I tried kidding her out of it, saying that she really wanted to go back and find a husband. She didn't laugh though. I don't think your Indians or Orientals have much of a sense of humor. They are very serious people.

A Southside Service Company

We interviewed the man in charge of employment, who said that they had no Indian employees because none had applied. His only knowledge of Indians was derived from a lecture given by an Indian at his church. His company had also done some work for a local Indian leader. He assured us

> If an Indian came to me and asked for advice, I would deal with him as an individual under unique circumstances, because each person has unique problems and must be dealt with individually. However, I think that Indians must all be assimilated if they are to survive in this economy. The reservation is no good for them. I don't really know how they should change but they must.

A Southside Manufacturer

The first man we interviewed told us that the company had never hired an Indian, mainly because they did not possess the technical knowledge necessary to qualify for a job in this particular company. He assured us that if a skilled Indian applied, he would be hired. As far as he knew, Indians had caused no problems in the city nor was he aware of their having any adjustment problems. A second man said that he was "prejudiced for them rather than against them."

A Second Southside Manufacturer

The man interviewed at this company said that they had never hired an Indian because it might "hurt them economically."

> Indians have little experience in selling and in working with others. They would offend a potential customer. I've heard that they drink on the job and cannot follow a rigid work schedule. We can't afford the risk.

This company did not sell a product needed by the individual consumer. Its only benefit to the neighborhood existed in the fact that it was a potential employer.

A Third Southside Manufacturer

The two men we interviewed at this company had had no business contact with Indians but they offered some comments based on other contacts.

The first man offered opinions based on his childhood experiences:

> They should first live in a small city, maybe one of about 30,000, until they are ready for life in the large urban centers. Their main problem is that the reservation isolates them from white standards and conforming to these white standards is a necessity if one wants to be able to survive in the city. Coming straight from the reservation gives them too much of a shock. There should be some way that they can work their way up to the white way of living if they want to.

The second man expanded on the comments of the first:

> I feel that they need to be re-educated in such a way that they could make it in the cities if they wanted to or they could stay on the reservation and still be able to live well there. Indians should live where they feel comfortable, and they should be able to be comfortable in either place. We shouldn't force them to give up their culture, and they shouldn't suffer for continued adherence to it. Either way, they deserve help.

A Southside Branch Office

The personnel manager at the southside branch of a large national company told us that

> Employees are not hired locally. As far as I know, we do not have any Indians in our training program nor do we have a special training program for Indians.

Some Tentative Conclusions about the Avenue

Not all the interviewers were present at all interviews. Therefore, some of them decided to write individual summaries about their experiences.

Interviewer I

With the exception of one clearly indisputable case of racial prejudice, there seemed to be a general failure (not necessarily an unwillingness) to understand the life style of the urban Indian. This lack of understanding, it could be concluded, might have been due to an unfamiliarity with Indian people. The parochial point of view manifested itself in some

very specific attitudes. For example, one respondent regarded the Indian as being sort of a childlike victim of certain savage instincts which must be placated in order to avoid open hostility. Another respondent, though expressing the need for understanding, felt that by assuming a "treat everyone equally" attitude that somehow he was being fair to all. Apparently, he never questioned himself as to whether this attitude was really fair to the individual differences of the Indian. Some of the other respondents showed a genuine desire to understand the problems that the Indian faces in the city. These people also expressed a feeling of helplessness. They wanted to understand and were sympathetic but were uncertain of themselves as potential sources of help. As one said, "The only way I can help them with their problems is either to hire them or not hire them."

Interviewer II

From my experiences as an interviewer along the avenue, I feel that I could make a three-fold delineation of the attitudes of the persons that I spoke with. I make the breakdown based on the kind of contact which they have had with Indians:

The first group consists of those who have Indians working for them or who have hired Indians in the past. The general tone of the interviews was negative --"they are lazy, unreliable, irresponsible" -- but there were some contradictions. I felt that some of the nice things said about Indians were made in the interest of "being fair and unprejudiced." The main complaint about their Indian employees seemed to be the fact that Indians didn't appreciate a job (as if hiring an Indian was doing a favor).

The second group consists of those who are engaged in services and businesses which involve direct customer contact; the majority of these people were clerks. The major difference between the people in this group and the people in the first group is the absence of any derogatory statements about Indians. (This might be a result of the small numbers involved.) What becomes obvious when examining these statements is the refrain that "Indian people are just like the rest of our customers." The similarity

cannot be overlooked; perhaps this is a result of the roles that "clerk" and "customer" are expected to play. One enters a store and acts a certain way. A person rarely brings his problems to his grocer (unless excuses for nonpayment are involved). Possibly this situation also explains why the interviews tended to be short. Either the persons interviewed did not wish to talk or they felt that they had little information concerning Indians and were not aware of any "problems" the Indian might have.

The third group I have chosen to call the "isolated" group. Their standard response was: We do not come into much contact with Indians because we hire people with technical skills and no Indian has ever applied. It seemed obvious to me that these people were professing to be tolerant yet were smugly aware that this tolerance would never be put to the test. They had no training programs of their own and were not aware of any in their respective fields. Some of the people said that Indians deserved "help" and were "making progress" but this did not seem to affect their responses. They were sure that "things are changing for the better" but were not interested in changing themselves. ("And the zookeepers are kindly but they're dumb.")

In general, it must be noted that none of the people I interviewed felt that Indians should return to the reservation. They all felt that this should be a personal decision. There was no agreement on the pressing problems facing the Indians. Some listed drinking, others the inability to hold a job. It would be curious to see the correlation between the respondent's profession and the nature of the problems mentioned. I suspect that their view is highly colored by the "facts" that they acquire from their "vantage point."

Interviewer III

When the responses of the whites I interviewed are taken together, there is a high degree of agreement on what specifically are the problems encountered in the urban setting by Indians in Minneapolis.

All the respondents mentioned problems of a practical nature, such as employment, drinking, and housing. All of the respondents agreed that the

the major difficulty seemed to be the lack of saleable skills with which to get and keep good-paying jobs. Interrelated with this were: (1) the inability to conform to rigid working hours; (2) the inability to realize the importance of giving notice when taking a leave of absence; and (3) the tendency to drift from job to job. All respondents were strongly critical of the heavy drinking of the Indians that they had come into contact with. They felt that drinking created (or aggravated) the employment and housing problems. These respondents theorized that drinking prevented steady employment, that it used money that could be spent more wisely, and that drinking created a "bad image" of the Indian that often led to an unwillingness to give them a chance. Most of the respondents agreed that Indians paid too much money for very poor housing. The rents were so high that many wage-earners were required to pay it; on the other hand, Indians came from extended-family backgrounds and tended to take in many relatives, thus necessitating the occupancy of a large (and, in Minneapolis, older) house.

Many respondents cited problems of an attitudinal nature. A tendency to opt for "good times" instead of remaining on the job all day compounds their problems because a reputation for irregular attendance causes many employers to hesitate when considering the hiring of an Indian. Another attitude that was cited was "defensiveness" toward whites. (Very often the incidents used to illustrate this "defensiveness" were ones where the Indian involved refused to acknowledge the "generous" action of some white person, often the respondent himself.) All respondents agreed that Indians were quiet and did not initiate or seem to desire friendship with whites. Many mentioned that Indians "stick together" -- a common enough description of people when they are with friends in a "hostile" environment.

The interviews which I had with white people on the southside of Minneapolis also lend themselves to another interpretation. Taken as a whole, a polarization of attitudes on the part of the white respondents can be seen. Those for whom direct contact with Indians was infrequent seemed to be more "concerned" and "apologetic" in favor of the Indians. They were more "liberal" in that they had an attitude of "I probably would act the same way in the same situation." Those whose experiences had been

painful were much more critical of Indians and much more defensive of their own actions. They seemed to say: "I tried it but it didn't work so don't call me a bigot." However, all of the persons agreed that Indians should stay in the city, that the reservation would do nothing for them, and that "they could make it if they try."

I think that the phenomenon that I witnessed in my interviewing was the clash of two defeatist attitudes. The whites seemed to be insulted by the Indian's failure to accept with joy the entire white, middle-class way of life. The whites felt that the "special" schools, programs, and agencies that have been set up to deal with the "Indian problem" would have been more than enough to equip Indians for life in the cities. Instead, they see drunken Indians stumble around on the corner. They reason that it is the fault of the Indian - that it is time for the Indian to "shape up or ship out." The Indian (as seen through the eyes of the respondents) appears to believe that the long, long road to economic improvement is much too tedious and that the "rewards" of the "American way of life" are often too far off to be obtained. Too often the Indian is told that he must "change" -- this often means that he is to drop "reservation characteristics" and "tribal ways" -- and adjust to the dominant culture. The problem seems to be that the dominant culture, because it is dominant, feels that the Indians must (and could, if he wanted to) adjust to it, and makes no allowances for failure to do so.

Interviewer IV

The respondents that I interviewed seemed to fall into three categories: helpful, defensive, and aloof. Those who were helpful were interested in the study I was doing and were glad to talk to me. Those that were totally defensive were quite adamant about Indians not being any "different"; they seemed to be trying to figure out what side I was on, and this made talking to them rather difficult. A couple who were defensive at first later admitted that they had been suspicious of me; they felt that I was doing research that could be harmful to Indians. Those who were completely aloof answered quickly and did not expand upon any topic. In general, there seems to be some awareness and concern about Indians in this area. I can make no predictions about the future of this concern.

The Street

The area that we have chosen to designate "The Street" is an area approximately ten blocks to the south of The Avenue. The same procedures were followed in both cases.

Public Agencies Along the Street

A Community Center

This organization, run by the county, offers help and services to families described as "hard core poor" who can't obtain such services elsewhere. The principal services are legal assistance, employment assistance, food distribution, and child care.

We were informed that Indians preferred to utilize the services of agencies having an Indian staff and orientation. However, some Indians do patronize this organization; they come in for canned food and for employment assistance. The main problem that the center had with locating jobs for Indians was the lack of training and education. An eighth grade educational level was the average and they usually had no specific skills. Even after a job had been secured for the Indian, problems would arise that stemmed from the casual style of their culture. Illness, hangovers, lack of interest, hunting season -- all were reasons that Indians gave for not continuing to show up for work. This problem extended even to the staff of the center. Our informant told us that two Indian employees generally showed up for work about an hour and a half late nearly every day. He told us that they had been very lenient because it was a "problem that Indians have." (On the other hand, if such a problem arose with white workers, they were terminated. Blacks were shown the same leniency as Indians, though the problem rarely arose.)

Because of these "cultural factors," it was difficult to find employment for Indians; as a result, most worked in labor pools and were paid on a daily basis. Salaries in the labor pools averaged about $1.80 an hour and the usual job was one that required no particular skill, such as loading and unloading trucks. If a client wanted a better job and lacked

the skills or background, he was directed by the agency to the appropriate training programs. One exception was noted: if the Indian client really enjoyed and wanted a particular job, he usually remained with it for a considerable amount of time and few of these "cultural" problems arose.

Other adjustment problems were said to be characteristic of Indians as a group.

> They are close-knit and very introverted, at least when they come into contact with whites. Housing is quite a problem because they tend to have large families with many more members than the usual nuclear family. Landlords resent having to charge for only one family, when several are actually living in the unit; therefore, they either raise the rent or refuse Indians.

Of the two persons questioned, one had some Indian heritage ("but it was so long ago I don't feel Indian") while the other had none.

A Southside Service Agency

The program director informed us that Indians make up only 0.8% of the total population within the agency's territorial boundaries. He said that the percentage of Indian students in the neighborhood schools was correspondingly low. He assured us that

> It is agency policy not to discriminate against any type of people. Therefore, no services catering only to Indians are available. If the Indian has any family problems, he can utilize our services just like anyone else. The main problems that Indians seem to have in our area are those that result from unemployment, such as lack of money. No Indians come to us for services. I assume that it is because they are financially more stable than those further north in the city.

The director went on to mention that the only contact that the agency had had with Indians in the past was a program at a local junior high school. The program was compulsory; its objective was to develop "motivation" in the students.

> From my experience, I feel I can safely say that the plight of the Indian is far worse than that of the Negro in our society. There is discrimination against the Indian and a lack of understanding of the Indian culture.

Religious Agencies Along the Street

We felt that a likely agency to have contact with members of the community was the church, so we decided to interview an inner-city coordinator for seven churches in the surrounding community. He was very cooperative and seemed to be an intelligent, concerned young minister.

> Our church has no Indian members because there are very few Indians residing in this part of the community. We do have six Indian children in our Saturday morning children's program. (This program is designed to free mothers for a Saturday morning and to give children creative opportunities.) In general, our contact with Indians has been rather slight. The only other contact with Indians occurred when two men came to the church because they needed money and a job. I got them enough money to return to the reservation, but one was back in a few weeks.
>
> Our lack of contact with Indians does not mean that we are unaffected by them. On the contrary, the threat of Indians moving into our community has had some major results. The size of the congregation has decreased from 270 members to only 60 members. Our congregation fears social change and the few attempts we have made in the direction of social service programs and education have been resisted. I believe that this area will be a predominantly Indian area, because the whites are moving further south or out of the city.

Our informant seemed to be genuinely sorry that he could help us with no additional information. He did refer us to another church which was in a more Indian-populated neighborhood.

Retail Stores Along the Street

Two Southside Used-Car Dealers

The responses given by the non-Indian informants at these two establishments were so similar that they should be dealt with together. Both men said that their firms had had little or no contact with Indians and that, due to the "reputation" of Indians, they did not expect much business with Indians in the future. As one said,

> Maybe five to ten percent of our customers are Indian. They tend to be interested in the older cars. The few who have actually bought cars here have been fifty-fifty. Some kept up their payments and some did not. They seem to be lazy and unreliable, and not really concerned about their cars.

Two Southside Bars

Again, since the responses of the owners of these establishments were so similar, they will be dealt with together. Neither man was Indian, and no Indians worked at either location (or at any other bar in the vicinity). Both places were small (capacity was about thirty) and were run by the owner and his wife or other relative.

Both said that Indians composed about half of their customers. Neither extended credit to Indian customers because of previous unfortunate experiences relating to the "unreliability" of Indians with regards to paying their bills. As one of them said,

> They work in labor pools and come in here at night to blow their checks. They stick together and don't really mix with non-Indians. They tend to come in here for a few drinks and then go on down the street. Generally, they seem to be okay, and don't cause too many fights.

Both men said that their opinions were based on a very small number of intimate encounters with Indians, observation of them as customers, and a large amount of hearsay.

A Southside Market

We spoke with the two young co-managers. Both felt that Indians comprised less than five percent of their total customers, and they felt that Indians came to the store because it was in the neighborhood.

> Indians don't really bring any different problems to the store. This is a lower-class neighborhood, so we have problems with shoplifting, but these are both Indian and white kids. We give credit only to personal friends of the owner but we are set up to handle food stamps. Most of our customers pay in cash.

One noted that, "The only way they seem different is that they will talk only if spoken to first, but once you get them going, they talk freely."

A Southside Restaurant

The manager was very reluctant to talk to us, and said that the questions did not apply to her establishment. The only statements

which she gave us were: "We get few Indian customers, and they come in after 1 a.m. when the bars close. They make no trouble."

A National Department Store

We interviewed the credit supervisor who stated that no record was kept concerning the race or ethnic background of customers. He did mention that an Indian community program had arranged to pay for the clothing of students in the program through their store.

The personnel department said that the store had a few Indian employees, and that the small number was due to the fact that only a few had ever applied.

The sales clerks we interviewed insisted that the Indian customers are treated just like any other customers. "We can't discriminate any more," said one. Another said that, "We watch Indians just like we do any other race."

A Southside Barbershop

The white middle-aged barber told us that "lots of Indians" come into his place. Since this was quite inconsistent with the replies of the other businesses in the area, we asked him: "Do you really have lots of Indian customers?" He said, "Yes, but I kick them out! I won't cut their hair!" Just as we were about to ask him why, he started to laugh.

> I just wanted to see how you would react. I do have quite a few Indian customers and I treat them just like anybody else. I serve all the customers who come in. I would be foolish not to; after all, that's how I make my living. They are the same as any other customers. Some pay, some don't. I'm not an expert on Indians; I just run a barber-shop.

We left, feeling that the barber thought our survey was a "waste of time" and that we were looking for something we could never find.

A Survey Along the Street

We felt that it would be of interest to the reader to provide a contrast to the descriptive material presented in this report. Therefore, in one area along the street, we decided to attempt to be as "objective" as possible. We asked only the questions indicated by our instructor, and we gave little chance for more than a brief answer on the part of our respondent. There were twenty-seven businesses included in the survey; the data are analyzed below.

The majority of the businesses were in the "small retail" category, with 22.6% engaged in food sales, 18.5% in car sales or repair, and another 14.8% in barber or beauty shops.

The person interviewed was the owner in 37.1% of the cases and a clerk or cashier in 29.6% of the cases.

None of the respondents were American Indian.

The majority of the stores had rather small numbers of patrons; 23.4% reported having only 50-200 customers and another 14.8% said that had from 201-500 customers daily. On the other hand, 7.4% reported more than 500 while 18.5% said they had fewer than 50 customers on an average day.

Nearly half of the businesses reported that Indians comprised less than 30% of their customer population. A significant number (29.6%) refused to answer the question.

When asked why Indians patronized their store, 44.4% replied, "Because it's in the area" while another 33.4% did not answer the question.

The vast majority said that Indians brought no particular problems into their place of business. Only 11.1% mentioned drunkenness and another 3.7% said something about "unreliability."

Only a minority of those interviewed felt that Indians had any adjustment problems; 14.8% mentioned discrimination and another 11.1% cited the change from rural to urban ways.

Only 11.1% thought that they could help Indians in any way with their adjustment problems. However, 29.6% said that their establishment could help in some way.

The vast majority (92.6%) said that they would not encourage Indians to return to the reservation.

Only 18.5% said that they had had experience with Indian people for more than thirty years; the majority (55.6%) had dealt with Indians for less than ten years. Of the total number of respondents, 40.8% said that they had had contact with Indians for less than five years.

None of the respondents had had any special training to deal with Indian customers.

Only 11.1% of the respondents felt that they were not as successful in dealing with Indians as non-Indians.

Nearly half (48.2%) did feel that Indians in Minneapolis have serious problems.

When asked to compare Indians to non-Indians, 29.6% saw no differences to exist, while 11.1% said that "Indians drink more" and 18.6% said that "Indians have more difficulties in interpersonal relationships."

While a majority of the respondents had noticed no differences betw-en their Indian customers, 11.1% said that they knew of some economic differences and another 14.8% had seen some tribal differences.

Only a quarter (25.9%) of the respondents knew that Indians had difficulty in obtaining jobs, while half (51.9%) said that they "didn't know" anything about Indians and their employment problems.

When asked if Indians had trouble maintaining their jobs, half (51.9%) replied that they "didn't know," while 18.5% said that Indians did not have any trouble. Another 22.2% said that they knew that Indians did have some trouble.

The majority of the respondents said that Indians did not have "different" buying habits; 18.5% said that Indians tended to buy less while another 3.7% said that they buy "on impulse."

Although only 18.5% of the informants reported that their Indian customers spent less money than non-Indians, we got the impression that most of the respondents felt that Indians were poor. The respondents seemed to be reluctant to mention any "differences" for fear of being branded "racist." They tended to be extremely hesitant when asnwering questions concerning Indians in the immediate neighborhood, although many spoke quite freely

when discussing "Minneapolis Indians." This striving to be socially correct was evident in many of the responses. For example, all of the respondents said that Indians had been employed in their respective businesses "in the past" but no Indians were presently employed at any establishment. There was no way for us to confirm or deny their statements about the past, and they relied on that fact when giving us their responses. We feel that we were being told what our informants had decided that it would be good for us to hear; we base this suspicion on two facts:

(1) Many of the answers to questions were qualified in such a way as to contradict the basic response. The many ambiguities made it difficult to really understand what the respondents felt. Although we have attempted to give a statistical summary of the responses, the reader must be warned that many of them were given with an attitude of caution and lack of thought or interest.

(2) The experience of the informants with American Indians seems to be extremely minimal. The only contact seems to be the formal buying-selling relationship. Therefore, we must conclude that much of the responses were based on hearsay and personally untested ideological opinions.

APPENDIX

Questionnaire

1. What is your position in this establishment?
2. What is the purpose of this establishment?
3. Are you an Indian?
4. How many customers do you have on an average day?
5. Of these people, how many are Indian?
6. Why do your Indian customers come to this establishment?
7. What are the problems of your Indian customers?
8. How do you deal with these problems?
9. How do your Indian customers differ from non-Indians?
10. What are some of the problems Indians face in adjustment to urban living?
11. Are you personally able to help them with adjustment?
12. Is your establishment able to help?
13. In your opinion, what are the reasons for difficulty in adjustment?
14. Would you encourage an Indian to return to the reservation? If so, why?
15. How long have you worked with Indians?
16. Have you taken any special training in regard to working with Indians?
17. Are any Indians employed at this establishment?
18. Do you feel as successful with Indians as with non-Indians?
19. What do you feel are the most serious problems that Indians face?
20. Can you describe the behavior of Indians in relation to other people? Are there different kinds of Indians?